



"INDEPENDENT IN ALL THINGS. NEUTRAL IN NONE."

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THE HISTORY OF A CRIME.

The Passage of the Gas Frontage Measure Was a Barefaced Piece of Bribery.

Several Members of the Fortieth General Assembly Are Willing to Testify to Facts,

And Gas Trust Lawyers, Heelers and Dupes Who Were Mixed Up Will Suffer.

The Gas Trust Plant Is Worth Four Millions, but Is Capitalized for Thirty Millions.

The People of Chicago Are Squeezed Out of the Surplus to Enrich Europeans.

The history of the passage of the gas frontage measure is the history of a crime.

By the lavish use of money this scandalous measure was rushed through the General Assembly in 1895.

As poor a Governor as Altgeld was, the actions of the corruptionists who were behind the infamous gas law were so bold and so open that the then Governor vetoed it in the following message:

State of Illinois, Executive Office, June 10, 1895.

To the Honorable, the Gentlemen of the Senate:

I herewith return, without my approval, Senate Bill No. 302, being "An act to amend section 1 of 'An act in relation to the consolidation of incorporated companies,' approved March 9, 1897."

This bill provides for the consolidation of any number of corporations organized for the same, or similar, general purposes. UNDER IT, ALL CORPORATIONS ENGAGED IN THE SAME GENERAL LINE OF BUSINESS CAN CONSOLIDATE, AND THUS LEGALLY FORM A MONOPOLY.

If this bill, or any existing law, made provision for adequately protecting the public in all such cases, then I would not hesitate to sign it, for it has been my desire to co-operate with the General Assembly as far as possible; BUT FOR THE STATE TO DELIBERATELY LEGALIZE MONOPOLY, AND MAKE ABSOLUTELY NO PROVISION FOR PROTECTING THE PEOPLE OF ILLINOIS FROM EXTORTIONS AND OPPRESSIONS, WOULD BE A CRIME.

JOHN P. ALTGELD,

Governor.

On motion of Senator Crawford, the consideration of the bill and of the veto message was made a special order for June 12 at 11 a. m., when action was again postponed until June 13, again until June 14, when after reading of the journal it was then postponed for one hour, then postponed until 4 p. m., when, on motion of Mr. Crawford, it was ordered to lie on the table.

How the passage of the measure was purchased in 1897 is well known. In fact the Senators and Representatives talk freely of the amount of bribery received and the way they got it.

They tell freely the names of the men they got it from and mix up prominent lawyers and others in a way that will bring several of them to trial in Sangamon County before a year passes over, for the iniquity will not be "out-lawed" for over fourteen months to come.

Chicago would have had a grand new gas company but for the passage of this scandalous frontage bill. On June 8, 1897, Franklin H. Head, Franklin MacVeagh, L. L. Coburn, D. F. Crilly, John A. Roche, J. C. Hatley, R. S. Critchell, Gilbert E. Shaw, H. W. Le-man and M. C. Bullock asked the Chicago City Council for an ordinance granting them a franchise for the purpose of erecting gas works and laying mains in the streets.

This company, composed of the solid men of Chicago—incorruptible men who

could not be bought—offered to furnish gas to the people for 80 cents per 1,000 feet.

Only three weeks would elapse from the time the ordinance was introduced until July 1, when the law giving the Gas Trust a perpetual monopoly of Chicago's streets went into effect.

These eminent citizens tried to prevent the monopoly from saddling the results of its bribery upon the people.

But they did not succeed. The Gas Trust bribed the aldermen, the MacVeagh ordinance was killed, and Chicago was given up forever to the Trust robbers.

Excepting China, it would be hard to find any country where the extortion practiced by the Gas Trust on the people of Chicago would long be tolerated. The Gas Trust robs the people in every way.

It rents gas ranges to poor people at outrageous prices. It then puts on extra pressure scientifically applied and forces air through the pipes at a great rate. This pressure is especially strong evenings when supper is being prepared. The people pay for wind which costs the Trust nothing.

Special assessments for gas lamps go right along, but the poor people do not get the gas on the streets after they pay their assessments. The Gas Trust owns the streets. The city has nothing to do with them.

The Gas Trust is not furnishing one-half the light it should furnish, and for years, according to published reports, it did not furnish 22-candle power to the city.

It is reported that the Gas Trust is getting paid for thousands of lamps which are not in service, and this can be easily verified.

The whole plant of the Gas Trust in Chicago can be replaced with even better machinery for \$4,000,000.

Yet it is capitalized for \$30,000,000, and is paying dividends on that basis.

Where does the \$26,000,000 of surplus come from?

From the pockets of the people of Chicago.

The people of Chicago are squeezed in order that the rich and titled stockholders in Europe may get their dividends.

All of which proves that when the profits of Europe are no longer profitable that profits which are profitable can be found in Chicago, Ill.

To make the Chicago gas more profitable, the money of the European nobles was used to buy such legislation as would make Chicago gas more tractable and give them no chance to kick.

We are anxious to see whether the Gas Trust will buy the Board of Assessors and Board of Review this year. It will try to.

Keep your eye on the assessments of the \$30,000,000 Gas Trust (which has a perpetual monopoly in Chicago) under the new revenue law.

The Legislature will have a chance to show its hand when the bill authorizing the city of Chicago to sell electric light to private consumers comes up

for passage. The city now has an efficient electric light plant, and if the Legislature gives it the necessary permission, Chicago people will be able to get light independent of the Gas Trust. Pass the bill.

Can Gas Trust money beat the new revenue law?

Leonard J. Eastland, one of the best-liked business men in Chicago, is strongly talked of for Mayor.

The receipts of the Gas Trust should be taxed.

What is the Legislature going to do with the Gas Trust?

The Gas Consolidation and Frontage Law is to be tested in the courts shortly. Some stockholders are preparing a bill to test the constitutionality of the law.

There is no knowing how long the Legislature of this State has been subjected to the attacks of scoundrels who sought to pervert justice in favor of dishonest corporations, or existing trusts. There may have been much or may have been little of this crime in the past. Ordinarily the cases become known only where a member has been approached by a briber and has repelled his advances, reporting the facts to the proper authorities. Nothing can be known of the cases, many or few, where bribes have been accepted, except in certain cases where certain members bibulously inclined, having imbibed pretty freely, talk too much, or have made affidavits as to how much money they were paid for their votes. While such cases are rare, it is claimed that since the last Legislature adjourned enough has been learned about how the warehouse and gas bills were passed to fill a pretty large book. This is the reason why the investigation to be started by the House Committee, or Sangamon County Grand Jury, should be thorough and untiring to ascertain how far certain people have gone who are criminally liable, and also to ascertain the extent of their criminal practices.

If the Attorney General, the Sangamon County Grand Jury and the honest members of the Senate and House do not shirk their plain duty, it will be an easy matter to bring the warehouse and gas boodlers up with a round turn and send them where they belong. Public opinion should be aroused on this subject. Every honest man in Illinois should consider it a personal duty to aid in the pursuit of the scoundrels who poison the stream of justice at its source. The crime of sending a dose of poison through the mails as a Christmas gift is of less turpitude

than that of planning secret means to approach a Legislator and to corrupt his judgment by a bribe.

Mayor Harrison is so far ahead of Altgeld that the latter can't catch him with a telescope.

Altgeld's following has been reduced to nineteen men. He will fade out of the race.

To the Editor of the Eagle: Some of us who voted for the gas grab in the Fortieth General Assembly want to see Jim Marr once more. Isn't he going to show up at this session?

COUNTRY MEMBER.

Joseph W. Errant, attorney at law, seems to be spending most of his time along pedagogical lines. We know of no position which Mr. Errant holds among the pedagogues which would entitle him to draw a salary. The question has arisen, Who pays the hotel bills, the railroad bills and the other bills which are necessary, and which seem to make Mr. Errant such an enthusiast in behalf of the people?

Ald. Toot wants no milk sold in Chicago except in bottles. This means the Trust. Ald. Toot should be bottled.

Hon. J. W. Suddard, president, and Hon. E. G. Schubert, secretary, of the Board of West Park Commissioners, were unanimously re-elected at the annual election held Tuesday.

Senator Nelson H. Case is a fair man, and consequently is now said to favor the repeal of his own law, known as the Case Garnishment Law.

A number of West Side Justices of the Peace are slated for removal. Their places will be filled by good men.

When the committee of the Civic Federation and Bar Association gets ready to confer with the Circuit and Superior Court Judges regarding the fitness of new candidates and present Justices of the Peace who desire to be reappointed, they will neglect their duty if they fail to thoroughly investigate the methods employed by certain Justices in transacting business as members of the Auditing Committee of the West Town Board.

There is one leading West Town official who heartily favors a most rigid investigation of the methods employed by the West Town Board Auditing Committee in the transaction of its business.

Two well-known lobbyists residing in Chicago, who had carte-blanc in handling the coin with which the warehouse bill was passed, have not been



HON. CHARLES H. SCHWAB.

Former Comptroller of the City of Chicago and One of Our Foremost Merchants

FARMERS CRY FOR JUSTICE!

They Demand the Repeal of the Infamous Warehouse Law Passed by Bribery in 1897.

They Demand the Indictment, Trial and Imprisonment of the Attorneys and Other Knaves

Who Went to Springfield and Bribed the Legislature to Pass the Bad Measure.

The Chicago Board of Trade Is Back of the Farmers in the Matter.

And Before June There Will Be Some Warm Criminal Trials in Sangamon County.

Chicago is one of the greatest grain centers of the world, and conditions here frequently affect prices everywhere. We have here a large number of grain elevators, with a storage capacity of about 90,000,000 bushels of wheat. They are chartered by law, and the owners act as trustees or custodians of other people's grain. The grain is inspected by an officer of the State, and is graded No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, as the case may be, and generally is sold by this grading, and all grain of the second grade is then poured together, the warehouse man giving a receipt for so many bushels of that particular grade. And when this receipt is again presented, he does not give back the same grain, but simply so many bushels of that grade. It was soon found that all grain of the same grade is not equally good—there will be No. 2 wheat almost equal to No. 1, and there will be No. 2 wheat falling close to No. 3. And in all those cases where wheat is sold, not by the grading, but rather by sample—as for milling purposes—the best quality sometimes brings several cents a bushel more than the poorer quality, though of the same grade. The warehouse men saw that they could sell by sample the best quality of a particular grade and supply its place by a lower quality of the same grade and pocket the difference. This would reduce the average quality of the whole pile, and in case the owners of any of the pile should wish to sell by sample they would suffer in consequence. The elevator owners went into the business of buying and selling grain and mixing it with that of their customers. A suit was brought to enjoin them from doing this. Much evidence was taken, and after a full hearing Judge Tuley, the Nestor of the bench of Chicago, granted the injunction on the grounds, among others, that the elevator owners were trustees or custodians of other people's property, that the interests of the public demanded that these custodians should be disinterested, and that it would be contrary to public morals to permit them to stand in a position where there would be a constant temptation for them to change the character of the property they thus held in trust; and, second, that if the elevator men were permitted to act in the dual capacity of trustees and dealers in grain they would possess such advantages as would enable them to soon drive all other buyers out of the market and thus give to themselves a monopoly of the grain trade of Chicago, and enable them, to a certain extent, to fix the price of grain in the Chicago market; for they could then, by combination, agree on the price, and by reason of their enormous storage capacity they could withhold or throw on to the market at any time vast quantities of wheat, and thus depress or raise the market at pleasure, which would not be so if there were many owners. The case was appealed to the Supreme Court, and that court sustained Judge Tuley, and, in a long and able opinion, expressly held that it would be against public morals and against public policy to permit the public warehouse men of this State to carry on a grain business in the same warehouse in which they keep their customers' grain.

But in the meantime the warehouse men secured the passage of a law which permits them to do the very things which the courts had held to be

against public morals and against public policy. The elevator people stand together. They have an agreement not to interfere with each other's business. The moment a bushel of wheat goes into their warehouses they are entitled to two cents storage. When an outside buyer offers 70 cents a bushel it will cost him 72 cents. The warehouse men, by giving up a little of their storage charge, can offer 71 cents, and thus drive the outside buyers out of the market. This done, the market is at the mercy of the warehouse men. The effect of this legislation, therefore, is to create a monopoly and place all that section of country which in grain matters is tributary to this city at the mercy of a combination of elevator owners in Chicago. This combination can easily combine with others elsewhere, so that this legislation lays the foundation of a combination of elevator owners in Chicago. The question now is, members of the Illinois Legislature, "Does it meet your approval? Will you vote to sustain it, or will you vote for its repeal?"

It is stated by one who knows that most important evidence has been obtained of the amount paid out to pass the warehouse bill in 1897. It is also claimed that certain middlemen, or go-betweens, have talked too freely about the sum of money paid certain members, even having gone so far as to give away the names of the persons who were bribed.

The farmers of Illinois are said to be contributing money to a fund to be used in prosecuting the warehouse boodlers of 1897.

The latest in regard to sending the warehouse and gas boodlers "over the road," is to the effect that the Attorney General of Illinois may take a hand in outlining the best way of carrying on the investigation.

A well-known lawyer, who represents one of the largest corporations in Chicago, was enjoying himself the other night, in a private dining-room not far from the County Building. He and a few "boon companions" were celebrating the election of Judge Sherman as Speaker of the House. After finishing one basket of champagne and commencing on the second, the lawyer grew talkative, and in the course of his remarks said: "Why, fellows, I can give you a tip or two, myself. You know I spent the greater portion of my time at Springfield during the last session, working for the passage of the warehouse bill; didn't get my name in the newspapers, either. But the warehouse bill passed, didn't it, which fact proves that with a plentiful supply of the 'long green' you can round up the members of the Illinois Legislature easier than the drover rounds up his herd of cattle."

One or two of the Illinois Live Stock Commissioners may be summoned and prove interesting witnesses before the Sangamon County Grand Jury when that body takes up the investigation relative to the passing of the infamous Warehouse Bill.